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RUEHKKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1908

RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 5756

RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 2356

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: OBAMA PRESIDENCY, GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS, INDO-PAK RELATIONS; NEW DELHI.

This countrywide cable reports on relevant media reaction/opinion from India's large non-English press. The Mission reports on English-language media via email through the daily "Early Edition" summary.

OBAMA PRESIDENCY

[¶1.](#) "OBAMA AND MUSLIM WORLD," op-ed article in the February 1 right-of-center DAINIK JAGRAN Hindi daily by strategic expert K. Subrahmanyam: "George Bush kept fighting till the last day of his term against terrorism, but never defined his enemy. But the new U.S. President Barack Obama did not vacillate in doing so. These elements are a radical form of Islam... he is committed to take effective measures to find its solution. He promised to hold talks with the Muslim community. He is concerned that Islamic countries' policies may not give a better future to future generations. He has no sympathy for those who want to solve the Arab-Israel conflict in extremist ways and destroy Israel. Al-Qaida has declared itself a U.S. enemy and Obama is determined to destroy it. The Taliban is also, in its blind extremism, promoting terrorism. Now Pakistan has to decide whether or not it wants U.S. aid to protect itself from the Taliban Islamic terrorism. Pakistan is stuck with this question of Obama."

[¶2.](#) "WHAT SHOULD INDIA EXPECT OF OBAMA," commentary in the January 31 centrist NAVBHARAT TIMES Hindi daily by Indo-

American relations expert Vijayalakshmi: "The Americans have elected Barack Obama their President and now it is his turn to fulfill his promises. Restoration of peace in West Asia and troop withdrawal from Iraq are the main issues. Afghanistan and Pakistan are the priorities on his agenda. Pakistan will get the U.S. economic aid only if it plays an effective role in the fight against the Taliban. Obama clarified that missile attacks on the Al-Qaida network within Pakistan would continue. The Obama administration has stopped 55 million dollars of aid to Pakistan. It has not appointed any special envoy on the Kashmir issue, which is also a relief for India. Instead of India-Pakistan, the focus is on Afghanistan-Pakistan. The question arises: would Obama seek India's help in this effort? If yes, what would be India's answer? There are a lot of expectations of the new president and his administration, but we will have to give him some time."

¶3. "AMERICA AND THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES", editorial in the January 30 right-of-center Urdu daily MUNSIF, Hyderabad: "The new President of America, Barrack Hussein Obama said that America is a friend of Muslim countries. His claim may be right at the individual level but over the past 15 years the way American administrations waged wars against Muslim countries, the way they destroyed and devastated Iraq and Afghanistan, and the way they played trick after trick in African Muslim countries, particularly Somalia, proves America's hostility to Muslim countries. However, Obama has extended his hand of friendship and trust to the Islamic world. It needs practical confirmation. The

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Islamic world may exonerate America for the massacre of millions of innocent Iraqi people. It may also forget bombardments on unarmed Afghan civilians. It may ignore the threats given to Iran provided Obama orders withdrawal of American forces from Iraq; provided Obama relinquishes the pursuit of Afghanistan. Basically, Bush was an imperialist and aggressive President of America. He faced the consequences thereof, while Obama can achieve heights in the history of mankind like other renowned American Presidents."

¶4. "AN AMIABLE WAY", editorial in the February 1 Islamist Urdu bi-weekly "DAAWAT", New Delhi: "In an interview with the al-Arabia T.V. Channel, President Obama said that America wants to move ahead on the path of progress and development, shoulder to shoulder with the Muslim world. It wishes their well-being. It is not against their progress and development. It does not want to inflict harm on them. He pays respect to the Muslim world. He has been to many Muslim countries, and realizes that every nation has its own aspirations and determinations. They should be given due regard. Now, Mr. Obama will have to prove through his conduct that he wants to maintain relations with the Muslim world, and is keen to move ahead on the lines of amiability, harmony and friendship."

¶5. "OBAMA: LOOKS GOOD ON THE POSTERS" op-ed article by senior editor Anand Agashe in the February 2, 2009 Mumbai edition of centrist Marathi daily SAKAAL. "Barack Obama does not have a magic wand and therefore it will take him quite some time and ingenuity to deliver the goods in today's America. In fact, the odds against him are daunting. The one thing he has in his favor is the fact that he has been able to connect with different segments of the American public. For a person of mixed parentage and a complex name that bears a resemblance to that of the Al Qaeda chief, Obama has indeed instilled confidence in a wide cross-section, and that includes the white population as well. His inclusiveness has brought him to where he now stands. It remains to be seen if this characteristic helps him to take on the entire journey ahead. Those trying to search for an Indian Obama can stop their investigation. There is no such person, at

least as of now. Most Indian leaders strike the note of divisiveness, and often Indian politicians draw electoral mileage out of such discordant policies."

16. "OBAMA'S IDIOM" editorial in the February 2, 2009 Mumbai edition of left-of-center Marathi daily LOKSATTA. "There are those who feel that Barack Obama will not be able to make any difference to American politics and administration. These 'theorists' will not be able to appreciate the fresh idiom in which Obama is trying to address the issues and challenges that already exist. In fact his Al Arabiya address is a good example of his unprecedently friendly approach to Muslim countries. American politics has been based on hatred of one kind or another. For a change, the top boss of the American administration is talking of peace, friendship, and cordiality. We have to appreciate the fact that he does

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not sound like his 'big brother' predecessors, especially Richard Nixon, Ronald Regan and both Bushes. It is of course during George W. Bush's tenure that self imposed policing of the world became the pivotal point of U.S. foreign policy..."

GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

17. "TWO FACES OF RECESSION IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES," editorial in the January 31 centrist DAINIK BHASKAR Hindi daily: "The rapid global job cuts in the current recession demand deep thinking and sensitive consideration. This problem is more serious in developed countries, and may have serious social repercussions. Families committing suicide in countries like the U.S. because they've lost jobs is just a sad face of this. The hidden face of crime and anarchy could be worse. Thus, the job crisis should be paramount in preparations to deal with the widespread economic downturn. The extravagant expenses of all other measures should be cut first, and job cuts should be the last option. The U.S. financial services company Citigroup's buying a 5 million dollar plane and the directors of the Wall Street investment banking companies' pocketing more than 18 billion dollars in bonuses is really shameful. It is the gruesome face of recession. The companies and the governments should seriously heed this problem before it becomes the cause of rampant social ills."

18. "ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF FUTURE", editorial in the January 30 right-of-centre Urdu daily URDU TIMES, Mumbai: "According to a newspaper report published on January 29, about one billion people in the world are at present on the verge of starvation due to the current global economic crisis, and the developed western industrial countries are making all out efforts to save the sinking titanic of the interest-based capital system of economics. This is because the cruel interest-based economy is the brain child of greedy international gamblers. Unfortunately, such principles of earnings, trade and economy are ruling the roost; they are completely based upon oppression, injustice, exploitation, gambling and hoarding. The only way out of the current crisis is to abandon the selfishness, gambling and usury."

INDO-PAK RELATIONS

19. "INVESTIGATIONS BY PAKISTAN", editorial in the February 1 right-of-center Urdu daily SIASAT, Hyderabad: "Before Barack Obama's South Asian policy gets more harsh and strict to remove the prevailing tension and distrust between India and Pakistan, these neighboring countries

in the subcontinent should cooperate with each other. If Pakistan provides some constructive information about the investigations to India, the attitude of the latter will become somewhat lenient. Moreover, the backwardness of

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Pakistan has played a key role in creating and fanning tension between the two countries. In many regions of Pakistan, victims of backwardness are getting entrapped in the conspiracies of terrorist organizations. They should tackle the current crucial situation with sincerity, seriousness, sagacity, prudence, wisdom and courage so that not only the people of Pakistan, but all its neighbors may be convinced that progress and development is possible in the subcontinent."

¶10. "WHY SHOULD INDIA TOLERATE PAKISTAN SO MUCH?
editorial in the February 2, 2009 centrist Gujarati daily GUJARATMITRA. "One really fails to understand whether India is Pakistan's slave [or an independent sovereign nation]? Why is India proving to be meek and impotent while dealing with this neighbor? Despite the 11/26 Mumbai attack investigation clearly establishing Pakistan as part of the conspiracy, India continues to supply clarifications and explanations intermittently to Pakistan. India is behaving in a manner that gives the impression that she is a criminal rather than a victim. Pakistan is coercing India to perform the laborious job of collecting evidence. After handing it over, Pakistan turns a blind eye when it comes to taking action against the perpetrators of this crime. It is high time the Indian government realized that the patience of Indians is running out. If America can carry out attacks on Pakistan, why can't India? Are our Indian leaders so insensitive that they can't see the blood of innocent civilians spilled in the 11/26 attacks? Why is India tolerating Pakistan's nonsense?

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